

# THE **Quill**

**A MAGAZINE FOR  
WRITERS, EDITORS,  
AND PUBLISHERS**

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As They View It • The Book Beat • After Deadline

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# As They View It



## Freedom of the Press First, Then Care In Its Exercise

By A. H. KIRCHHOFFER

Managing Editor, The Buffalo (N. Y.) Evening News

WE witness a growing tendency to encroach upon the freedom of the press, which must be held inviolate for the preservation of our liberties and our government. At the rate the bench, bar and other agencies are combining in their efforts to abridge that freedom guaranteed in the Constitution, it will not be many years before we face the momentary danger that some overt act to cut the heart out of the Bill of Rights may be attempted or committed. As patriots who love our country, believe in the form of government under which it operates and remember Thomas Jefferson's estimate of a free press, we must resist such efforts to the last ditch. The abuses which admittedly exist, although they are not representative of journalism in America, are no excuse for the remedies which some would apply. Too often they are a cloak for evils which a militant press would expose.

Newspapers must take the helm in the leadership of democracy. They must see that evils which should be remedied are corrected, but they must remember what Mr. Justice Hughes said while he was engaged in the 1924 presidential campaign.

"The motto for democracy," he urged, "must be educate, educate, educate. You can find no other security than the intelligence and the confidence of the people. But you can not at once educate and stifle opinion. There is hope in free air. There is tonic in confidence in ultimate success of what you strongly believe to be true, but the policy of denying free expression of political opinion is death to the republic for that expression is its vital force."

In exercising these prerogatives, we must remember that the newspaper or individual who throws discredit upon all government without just cause in blanket charges and insinuations is performing a poor service. If there is individual or group dishonesty or corruption, let it be fearlessly exposed and punished; but to follow what is the fashion in some circles, to impute ulterior and improper motives to every person and to seek to destroy that faith which we should have in conscientious and able officials, even if their acts do not square with our opinions, is a rank assault upon the foundations of our country. Wilson suffered it; Hoover is experiencing it. The vindictiveness of man opposed to man is allowed to degrade what should be a noble service.

# THE QUILL

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A Magazine for Writers, Editors, and Publishers

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## Bank Statements Are News

◆ Their Interpretive Handling by the Press Aids  
Financial Institutions and the Public as Well ◆

By BURRUS DICKINSON

**N**EWSPAPERS have prevented many bank suspensions, but the record of bank failures in the United States is an unhappy one and calls for action.

During the relatively prosperous period from 1922 to 1928, there was a continuous stream of bank failures in this country, more than one a day. During the depression, the rate of failure became more intense, reaching its peak last October when closings averaged 20 a day.

Legislation pending in Congress may do much to correct the weaknesses in our banking machinery and prevent suspensions in the future. But a complete remedy by legislation is not probable, and there will remain an opportunity for newspapers to keep banks open—if newspapers can find a way to do the job.

who were willing to affirm their faith in the suspected bank.

The appeal to the frightened depositor usually has been an emotional one. The editorials and interviews repeated again and again the words "confidence" and "faith." Seldom was attempt made to give a rational demonstration of the soundness of the bank in question. Why?

Editors apparently believe they do not understand banking, and that certainly it is impossible for the average reader to comprehend.

Banks, however, are required to make an official publication of their statements of condition three or four times each year. This legal requirement presumes that the public has the right to know at least some of the facts about banks and that it may understand these facts when they are published.

As a matter of fact, the published statement reaches few readers. It is usually buried in the advertising columns. If discovered, it means little or nothing to the average reader. Even for the reader who understands banking it is inadequate in that it does not include preceding statements.

**N**EWSPAPERS could, I believe, perform a great service by preparing stories interpreting these bank statements and running them in good news position.

Such a policy would have two advantages. First, the depositor would understand, in part at least, the condition of his bank, and would be less apt to be frightened into withdrawing his money. Second, the banker, knowing his report would be scrutinized by many eyes, would strive to have a "good" statement, which is another way of saying that he would try to keep his bank in a conservative condition.

Needless to say the searchlight of publicity should not be turned abruptly on all banks at the present time. To do so would be to invite runs on the many banks that have been weaken-

**T**HE only circumstances under which the press in general has given much thought to banks has been during a run or when a run was threatened. Faced by such an emergency, newspapers have quieted uneasiness by means of editorials, often on the front page, and by publishing interviews with prominent business men

### BANKS AND THE PRESS

**B**URRUS DICKINSON discusses the relations of the press and the banks of the nation generally in the accompanying article and the interpretation of bank statements specifically. He has interpreted several such statements for Illinois newspapers.

Mr. Dickinson is instructor in financial journalism at the University of Illinois. He received his A.B. degree from Eureka College in 1926; his M.A. in English at the University of Illinois in 1928 and his Ph.D. degree in economics from the same institution in 1930. He has been on the staff of Illinois school since 1927.

His newspaper experience has been with the Woodford County Journal, weekly at Eureka, Ill., and the Decatur (Ill.) Review.



ed by the depression. No newspaper can afford to bring about the closing of a weak bank which may pull through if business improves, although there is some basis for arguing that a bank should be closed just as soon as its position becomes doubtful.

The weak position of the Bank of United States, the large New York institution which closed late in 1930, was known for months by those depositors who read and understood its weekly statements. Being forewarned they withdrew their deposits. Because of this, the depositors who did not withdraw took a doubly heavy loss. The continuation of this bank long after its situation had become precarious was permitted only by the fact that the news of its weakness was, for all practical purposes, suppressed.

**I**N general, a newspaper which chose to interpret bank statements for the ordinary reader should not initiate the plan until such a time as it was satisfied the banks were sound. The bankers should then be warned that their quarterly statements would be explained and compared with those of other banks.

The interpretation of a bank statement is not an impossible task for a reporter who is untrained in finance. The basic principles are easily understood.

Newspapers sometimes emphasize the fact that deposits have increased or decreased. This is a mistake. It is not the amount of deposits, but what the bank does with them that determines its condition.

Banks usually fail either because they make bad investments in the sense that the money is never repaid, or because they "freeze" too large a portion of their deposits in investments which cannot be converted into cash on short notice. The path of least resistance in banking is to "load up the hilt" with non-liquid investments, as they are the most profitable. Publicity provides a check against this tendency.

A bank normally should have strictly liquid assets, which can be converted into cash within 48 hours, equal to between 30 and 40 per cent of demand and time deposits combined (experience has shown that time deposits are often withdrawn just as unexpectedly as demand). Liquid assets should seldom, if ever, be less than 25 per cent of deposits. Because of the extra hazard at the present time, many banks have 50 to 75 per cent of their deposits in liquid form.

**S**EVERAL items in the bank statement represent perfectly liquid assets: "cash," "reserve with Federal Reserve bank," "deposits in other banks," "due from other banks." These items grouped together are ordinarily at least 10 per cent of deposits.

U. S. bonds are nearly as liquid as cash because they can be sold or pledged as security for loans, to secure cash on a few hours' notice. Banks are keeping about 20 per cent of their deposits in government bonds at the present time, although the percentage is somewhat lower normally.

Prime commercial paper and prime bankers' acceptances also are fairly liquid, but they are not usually reported separately in the published statement.

"Other securities" (bonds) may or may not be liquid. Their status in this respect is not disclosed in the statement. Banks invest in "other bonds" to secure a higher interest return than is available on U. S. bonds, with the expectation that if necessity arises they can be sold for an amount about equal to their cost. Even in good times, however, some bankers have exercised such poor judgment that bonds purchased could not later be sold without a loss, and were consequently not liquid because the bank was unwilling to sell them. Most of the recent bank suspensions can be traced to this source. Consequently it appears that the reporter should not regard "other securities" as liquid assets unless he has definite information that they can be marketed without substantial losses. Published bank statements would possess much more meaning if both cost and market value of "other bonds" was required to be stated.

**T**HE amount and nature of loans and discounts outstanding is another important item in analyzing bank statements. Normally loans and discounts are about 70 to 80 per cent of deposits. Some banks loan 100 per cent of deposits, but generally speaking a bank which loans more than 85 per cent of deposits may be regarded with some suspicion. Because of the depression many of the more conser-

vative banks have cut loans down to 40 to 50 per cent of deposits.

The nature of loans is more important than the amount, however. Most of the loans should be of a type that will be repaid in full within six months. Loans to merchants or manufacturers to purchase goods are nearly ideal, because the loans will be repaid when the goods are resold. Loans on collateral are good, if adequately secured by readily marketable collateral, such as stocks listed on an exchange. Loans on farms or city real estate are not desirable for banks, except in limited amounts, say less than 20 per cent of deposits, because they are non-liquid. Many of the bank failures several years ago were caused by too large a proportion of loans on farms and real estate.

Some bank statements give information as to the types of loans held by the bank. Better, if it can be secured, is a more detailed explanation from the banker on this subject. Legislation requiring more complete statements in this respect would be very helpful.

An excellent method of analyzing the ratio of liquid assets to deposits and the ratio of loans to deposits, is to compare these ratios for individual banks with the combined statement of "Reporting Member Banks of the Federal Reserve System in 101 Cities," which statement appears in metropolitan dailies every Tuesday or Wednesday.

**A**N interpretive story using this method would be written somewhat as follows:

"The Blank Bank statement released yesterday shows that the bank has improved its liquid position since the statement issued three months ago.

"The Blank Bank has \$375,000 in cash and U. S. bonds, equal to 37 per cent of its \$1,000,000 deposits, compared with 34 per cent three months ago. The position of the bank compares favorably with that of the Reporting Member Banks of the Federal Reserve System in 101 Cities, which reported Tuesday 32 per cent of deposits in cash and U. S. bonds.

"Loans outstanding were \$600,000, or 60 per cent of deposits, compared with 61 per cent three months ago. Member banks in 101 cities reported loans equal to 73 per cent of deposits. Loans were distributed as follows: secured by real estate, \$100,000; secured by collateral, \$200,000; others, \$300,000."

Such newspaper discussion of bank statements might also

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# Thanks to the Depression—

Necessity Forced This Newspaperman to Attempt Something  
He Always Had Wanted to Do—to Live by Free-Lancing

By JOHN F. DeVINE

**O**NCE upon a time I had a job. In fact, I've had several. The last time was 'way back in 1930, at the start of Depression Decade. I was on the *Free Press*, in Newark, N. J., and all the time I was working I cursed my fate because I didn't have "time to write."

The complaint wasn't original. You've heard it before, and you will hear it again as long as there are newspapermen who set down their coffee cups, lean across table tops and say confidentially: "I've got an idea for a swell story I'm going to write next week."

Next week, like Tomorrow, never comes.

Well then, we'll say it rarely comes. It came in my case because my job blew up.

**T**IME after time I had sat in restaurants or in "Louie's" place and threatened to quit. I wanted to write, I insisted, and one couldn't write when the city desk took the attitude that anything under fourteen hours was only a half day's work.

When I wasn't talking in that vein, one of the other rewrite men or reporters from my own paper, or one of the boys from an opposition sheet, was. We all felt the same way, but none of us ever quit for the simple reason that there are too few pay-days when you begin to free-lance. And the rent goes on.

On January 14, 1931, just two days less than a month after I had been married, the publisher threw the paper into receivership. We were told not to worry, though. The paper, the city editor assured us, would continue. Two hours later, upon returning from an assignment, another reporter and I found the place a mess. Newspapers and copy paper were strewn all over the floor. Nobody was around except a copy boy. We were free at last. Free to write, or to starve. We didn't have to quit. Our jobs had quit us.

**I**F you have tried to get a newspaper job in or around New York in the last year and a half you will know that I got nothing but sympathy from

city editors during the next two weeks. At that, sympathy from a city editor was something. So I stopped looking for a job.

## NO TIME TO MOAN

**N**O moaning about the depression is being done by John F. De Vine, the writer of the accompanying article on free-lance experiences. He's too busy.

One of the many newspapermen who lost their jobs when the depression swept over the city-rooms, he tried for two weeks to land another job with a newspaper and then went to work for John F. De Vine. He is still working for the same boss and expects to continue doing so—depression or no depression.

Readers of *The Quill* will remember two previous articles by Mr. De Vine, whose 12 years of newspaper work included almost every sort of assignment. One was, "Seats on the Aisle," the other, "And It's Called Criticism."

We didn't have money enough to live on while I wrote a long story, one that would take time and patience to write. And I couldn't afford to take the chance of writing something that might not sell right away.

So I sat down one night and wrote two 1,000-word love stories for the McClure Syndicate. I had sold a few before and knew I would get paid for them—if only five dollars apiece—in a short while. A couple ideas rang true as I turned them over in my mind, trying to pick flaws in them. I 'phoned the editor of *Charm*, a magazine then published by L. Bamberger & Company, in Newark. She liked the ideas and asked me to write the articles. I did, and she bought them.

More than a week went by, and I had heard nothing from the McClure Syndicate. I wrote another short short one morning and took it over to the

syndicate office. Miss Marshall bought the three stories and I got the check a couple days later.

Five-dollar love stories don't happen to constitute my ideas of "writing," but they help to buy food. A few days later the editor of *Charm* called up and outlined an article she wanted. I did that, and another check was forthcoming.

**A**LL this time I had been considering myself just another newspaperman out of a job, rather than as a free-lance writer. But after the editor of *Charm* called up I began to see things differently. That, I figured, was not a bad start in free-lancing. I decided to continue. There weren't enough checks to support us decently, though, so we gave up our apartment and went upstate to live at my home for the summer.

The mountains, the lakes and the pretty country roads winding through the Adirondacks were a bit too much for me. I didn't get nearly as much work done as I should have. I did sell a few things, but by August I was beginning to get restless.

Some friends came up to visit us and asked us to come back to New York with them, saying we could stay at their place until I found something I wanted. With five dollars as our capital we accepted.

**O**N our first day back in New York I got an assignment to novelize a movie for one of the screen magazines. It was "Hell Divers." That night I was given a 120,000-word novel to cut and rewrite for a literary agent. We stayed two weeks with our friends, and then took a place of our own.

Since then I have fictionized two more movies, "Panama Flo," and "The Mouthpiece," "ghosted" two novelettes and a travel article, and sold an article and a story to King Features Syndicate while writing other things in which I was interested.

Prohibition long has amused me because of the various ways in which it has led to the downfall of office-holders who took the wrong side, or

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# An Editor Takes Inventory

By DOYLE L. BUCKLES

Editor, The Fairbury (Neb.) News

**F**EW people realize the importance of a newspaper to its community. That is old stuff but it's true that a newspaper is a mirror of its community life. It is within the power of the editor, however, to select that phase of life which he wishes to reflect. He can reflect the sordid, criminal, gloomy side or he can reflect the clean, constructive, cheerful features of his community. A newspaper can make or break its community.

Too many people take the home newspaper for granted. And it is not surprising when one realizes that very few newspaper editors can tell or show what the newspaper means to its community. Newspapermen are the poorest self-advertisers in this advertising age—and the big reason is that they seldom take the time to analyze their own product.

Five years ago a student in the agricultural journalism department of the University of Wisconsin used the paper I was editing then in Wisconsin as a basis of a thesis. He made an analysis that was an eye-opener. I commenced to study my own paper, entered it in the state contests and was surprised to win two firsts, one for best farm news service, and one for the best editorial page.

Then came an invitation to enter the paper in the National Editorial Association contests. I tore up a complete file to see just what we had done during the year. As a result we were able to present an exhibit that showed the widespread range of activities of a community newspaper. Those entries in the national contests won second place in the greatest community service class; third in the advertising contest and honorable mention in the best weekly class.

Two years ago I made an analysis of a small eastern Oklahoma paper, published in a town of 1,500. These exhibits won two firsts; first in community service; and first in the best agricultural development program.

**L**AST year we tore apart a complete file of the Fairbury News and sent an exhibit to the judges of the National Editorial Association. We

## EDITOR'S NOTE

**T**HE Fairbury News won the 1931 National Editorial Association's award for the greatest community service rendered by a weekly newspaper.

Most of the service activities of the newspaper are included in this accounting by Editor Buckles.

A perusal of the activities listed will show why the N. E. A. judges found the Fairbury News worthy of receiving the national award and also will suggest to other energetic editors and publishers projects and services that they may well sponsor and undertake in their communities.

were awarded the silver cup for the "greatest community service."

These experiences have convinced me that few editors honestly realize just what they are contributing to their communities. I know there are hundreds of editors who are doing far more for their communities than we are. But they don't know it and we know that their readers don't realize it.

In making a survey of last year's files for the purpose of preparing exhibits in the National Editorial Association contest for "Greater Community Service" we discovered that the Fairbury News had, among other things, done the following:

Adopted the slogan of "The Voice of Friendly Fairbury," as friendliness seemed to be an outstanding characteristic of this progressive community.

Wholeheartedly supported every civic organization in every worthwhile community project.

**I**SSUED a special edition featuring the annual Kiwanis-Farmer tour. More than 500 business men and farmers chartered a special train and spent an interesting and enjoyable day visiting the agricultural college in

the neighboring state of Kansas. It helped to cement the friendly feeling between town and country. The edition included many good-will advertisements of Kiwanis business men, and one page ad contributed by the News on the purpose of the organization. The edition included pictures and special articles describing the interesting departments of the university, messages of welcome from the college president, heads of departments, and city officials. 500 extra copies were distributed on the train.

Issued a special edition and distributed 1,000 extra copies in neighboring towns, featuring "Friendly Fairbury" and the Jefferson County Fair, on the "booster" trip sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. Published numerous articles prior to the trip to encourage 100 per cent participation. Two special buses were chartered and 60,000 souvenirs were distributed on this trip on which the local merchants spread the gospel of "good will."

Issued an "Election EXTRA" following the general election in which great interest developed because of close contests and upsets. The 4-page extra was issued within a few hours after the results were tabulated and we scooped daily papers on state and local returns.

**A**IDED in the elimination of unemployment in the city; contributed a page advertisement calling attention to the plan adopted by civic organizations in securing pledges of day work during the winter for men who had filed their applications at the free employment bureau. We signed one of the cards and also threw open our classified columns FREE to those who wanted employment and those who wanted employees. We also printed numerous articles featuring this plan and giving credit to those who cooperated.

Encouraged and supported the annual Christmas community party during which several thousand children met Santa Claus and received sacks of candy. Devoted considerable news space and advertising space in advertising this community party. Our city editor received free an-

## An Examination of His Newspaper's Files for a Year Discloses an Impressive Record of Community Service

nouncements over five radio stations, calling attention to this party.

Assisted charity organizations and religious organizations in their work. Threw open our columns to the Red Cross, Christmas Seal committee, Y. M. C. A., Y. W. C. A., Associated Charities, American Legion and Auxiliary, and others. Published news stories and gave two large display ads to the Legion to aid them in securing old toys for redecorating and redistribution in needy homes.

**L**AUNCHED an effective campaign immediately following Thanksgiving, to awaken Christmas spirit and encourage earlier shopping. Contributed money, front-page editorials, news space and personal service in helping make possible a successful uniform Christmas street decoration project sponsored by the Junior Chamber of Commerce. The sum of \$3,700 was pledged in one day; and the beautiful appearance of the business section stimulated business and created much favorable comment. Incidentally bank records show that nine prominent firms made deposits to the amount of \$40,844.82 in the first eleven days of December, 1931, in comparison to \$38,883.08 during a similar period in 1929; showing that business could be increased despite the demoralizing talk of depression.

Featured national "Safety Week" in editorials, news stories and advertising tie-ups. Gave publicity to all meetings aimed at the elimination of accidents.

Actively supported athletic contests, baseball, football, basketball, boxing and golf; and encouraged the development of the recreational possibilities of the community. Devoted special sport pages to build up interest in the state and county baseball leagues. Contributed to funds for the support of state league team.

Heartily supported the "Good Roads" program of

the Chamber of Commerce. Fifty miles of farm-to-market highways were graveled this year through an unusual cooperative plan by which the Chamber of Commerce contributed \$25 per mile, the farmers furnished labor or gravel and the county board financed the balance. This successful plan has attracted state and national attention.

**E**NCOURAGED the development of the Blue River as a recreational possibility. Made application for a carload of bass and perch to be planted in this river.

Gave unlimited space to the encouragement of the Jefferson County Fair, distributed 1,000 extra copies of paper, featuring the 1930 fair on the booster trip.

Published stories that kept alive the achievements of early pioneers. Also carried a column of news from our files back as far as 55 years ago.

Supported church organizations with publicity. Issued a special edition featuring the history of all churches in the county and the program for the annual county Sunday School convention. Contributed a page advertisement encouraging church attendance. Furnished modern cut service for the use of the church paper, which is published each week from our office.

Gave support to the Junior Cham-

ber of Commerce drive for a municipal air port; and the special election to decide upon a suitable bond issue to cover the expense.

Devoted our editorial page to community - building editorials - clean, constructive and cheerful.

To stimulate business, 10,000 copies of a special harvest sale section were distributed through the trade territory.

**A**S Fairbury is located in a purely agricultural section, we have paid special attention to farm news, devoting pages to agricultural news. The *News* endorsed the county agent plan, the work of 4-H Clubs, contributing news space, editorials and silver cups and cash prizes for the encouragement of this organization of boys and girls. We published many articles on modern methods of farming, and played up all important farm news on the front page of our paper—in fact we have tried to show that the *News* and Fairbury are vitally and sincerely interested in the welfare of our farmers and their children—and that we recognize no city limits.

Special columns were devoted to city and county school notes; editorials and news articles featured value of education and gave publicity to outstanding school activities.

In order to publish all the news that is fit to print we have issued each week an average of 16 pages per edition, in which one will find contributions from correspondents representing forty communities—in fact we carried 60 or more departments that covered news from births to deaths; and from our justice court to the national capital. We published everything possible to make our readers proud of Fairbury and to "sell" Fairbury to the rest of the world; and to live up to our slogan—

"THE VOICE OF  
FRIENDLY  
FAIRBURY"

### Back Trailing an "All-American" Editor

**W**INNING honors for good journalism is becoming a habit with Doyle L. Buckles, who was named quarter-back on Prof. John H. Casey's All-American Weekly Newspaper Eleven for 1931.

A Kansan by birth, he had served an apprenticeship as a printer and make-up man before being graduated from the University of Kansas in 1920. He was recommended for a Rhodes Scholarship and later attended the University of London, King's College and the London School of Economics and Political Science.

While he was editing the Oconto (Wis.) Reporter in 1929, the paper won second place in the National Editorial Association's community service contest, third place in the advertising contest and honorable mention in the best weekly class. Entries of the same paper in the Wisconsin state contests won first places in the best editorial page and best farm news service contests. In 1930, his entries as editor of the Sallisaw Democrat-American in the Oklahoma state contests won first places for community service and best agricultural development program. Then came the designation of the Fairbury News as first in the community service contest of the N. E. A. for 1931.



# Entertainment or Enlightenment?

- ◆ Editors May Develop a Warped Sense of News Values ◆
- ◆ In Attempting to Satisfy a Public Desire for Sensation ◆

By HOWE V. MORGAN

Editor, The Sparta (Ill.) News-Plaindealer  
Past President, Illinois Press Association

**N**EWSPAPERS, a half century or more ago, were largely vehicles provided for the views of the editors. Even the news columns were colored by personal opinions. Every line, it seems to the reader today, was a pen picture of the man behind the desk. The editor may not have been entirely right, but he did endeavor to enlighten his readers upon the public questions of the day. There was no dictation from the business office.

Today, it is evident that too many editors keep their eyes on the cash register. They no longer express their opinions in an effort to enlighten a knowledge-hungry public. They must not offend for fear the business office may suffer. Therefore, they seek to entertain instead.

It is doubtful if newspapers should attempt to be molders of public opinion, in the strict sense of the word. In their news columns, they should seek to give information—not opinions. A well-written news article will state facts without bias and discoloration according to the whims of the writer or the editor.

But if newspapers are to perform their mission as informers, the effort must not stop with the manner in which news articles are written. The matter of selection must not be overlooked. For instance, the editor of a "wet" newspaper should not give prominence to the killing of a bootlegger by a dry agent, and at the same time throw away an equally important news item about the slaying of a dry agent by a bootlegger.

**N**EWSPAPERS, to hold the place in civilization allotted to them by the public because of the records of many famous editors of the past, should not be mere recorders of events. There is a place for editorial opinion and that place is on the editorial page. There the editor can express, and should express, his personal viewpoints on the issues of the day. Such opinions should have no regard for the business office, favor for friend, or malice for foe. There

personalities may be woven into the news events of the day in such a way that the editor of any paper may, if he is capable, establish himself in his community as the leader he should strive to be.

Perhaps it is easy to be theoretical in the treatment of any subject on the value of news articles and their treatment and find it an entirely different matter to put such theories into practice. But without a desire, backed by an earnest effort to live up to theories and codes, no publication can hope to succeed and leave a name for posterity.

**I**T appears to be a fact that the human race is seeking entertainment in this troublesome day, but newspa-

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**H**OWE V. MORGAN has spent all of his working days in country newspaper shops. He learned the printer's trade in the plant of the old Greenville (Ill.) Sun and later worked as a linotype operator and then city editor of the Greenville Advocate.

He bought the News at Sparta, Ill., in 1919 and in 1921 acquired the competing paper, the Plaindealer, consolidating the two as the Sparta News-Plaindealer. This paper has won state and national awards for excellence.

Mr. Morgan has been active in editorial associations, serving first as secretary and later as president of the Southern Illinois Editorial Association and in 1930-31 was president of the Illinois Press Association. He is now a member of the executive committees of the two organizations and also has been a member of the National Editorial Association for 12 years.

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pers can provide entertainment without sacrificing ideals in the treatment of news and opinions. Modern comic strips, serial stories and "columns" have their place in the press of today. But we must not overlook the fact that the public looks to the newspapers for information primarily, with other features as side issues.

I cannot agree with those who insist that crime news should be relegated to the back page or eliminated entirely. Crime news should be published and displayed according to its news value. But newspapers overstep the bounds of propriety when they attempt to make heroes out of the Jesse Jameses, the Al Capones and the Harry Thaws through the stress laid upon their bravado and deeds in the many feature stories which entertain but do not stress the fact that man's sin is sure to find him out, and that "the way of the transgressor is hard."

We might therefore arrive at the conclusion that editors may develop a warped sense of news values in their efforts to satisfy a sordid public desire for sensation. They may give two inches on an inside page to the development of an invention which will revolutionize the system of communication, and two columns on the front page to the story of a man whose claim to fame lies solely in the fact that he has developed a new system of bridge.

**I**F newspaper readers have developed a desire for sensational news and entertainment to the exclusion of enlightenment, it is reasonable to believe the newspapers are responsible. A united press can be a molder of public opinion. It can be the progenitor of an enlightened race, or it can lead a nation to the depths of degradation which resulted in the fall of Rome. It can lift the readers to the mental level of the great statesman or philosopher, or drag them down to the level of the moron.

The point for the editor to decide depends largely upon his ambition. If his little tin god is the silver dollar, perhaps he will gain more favor in the eyes of his idol by catering to the cravings of his public for entertainment and sensation. If he desires to be a Moses in the wilderness he will have to close his eyes and ears to degrading demands and build an altar where "entertainment" will be sacrificed for "enlightenment."



# WHAT SHEER EFFRONTERY!



Thus This Young Reporter Labels His Act of Playing  
Tennis While Keeping a Railroad President Waiting



By ROGER E. MARTIN

**T**O paraphrase the tritest expression ever applied to the newspaper profession, let it be known that it is commonplace when the president of a railroad keeps a reporter waiting, but it is a tale when a reporter keeps a railroad president waiting.

Last summer I actually, brazenly, inexcusably, and unreasoningly kept the president of the Northern Pacific Railway system waiting to give me an interview while I played tennis.

The crime was committed in just the manner stated. It was done coldly but without reason. It was in the July of 1931 when, with quite a few others, I was enjoying an enforced idleness. Except for helping out occasionally on the reportorial staff of the local daily of my home town, Merrill, Wis., I had retreated into a vicious life of sleep, tennis playing, and lawn mowing.

**O**N the particular morning of which I write, I was awakened at 8:30 a. m. by the nerve-lashing sound of the telephone. I heard my mother, once a newspaper woman, answer. She was speaking excitedly. As I later found out, it was with her friend at the hotel desk.

She told me to hurry up, dress and go down to the hotel where I was to interview Charles Donnelly, president of the Northern Pacific Railway. He was to be in the city for only a few hours, and was expecting me at nine. He suddenly had complied with the hopeful invitation of a homecoming committee asking his attendance at a Fourth of July celebration. He had been born and raised in Merrill and had returned after an absence of 40 years.

With this and some other scanty information, I was roused out of bed. From this moment on, I am unable to explain my conduct. I dressed in ducks for tennis, and, remembering that I was to play with another vacationing college man at nine, went over to the courts. At nine-thirty I had taken a set, and then, and not until then, did I tuck my racket under my

## NEVER AGAIN!

**O**NE experience of the sort he describes in the accompanying "confession" article was enough, observes Roger E. Martin, who was graduated from the School of Journalism at the University of Wisconsin this spring.

Never again will he face the loss of a page-one story by play before work, pleasure before business.

The experience he describes occurred in Merrill, Wis., his home city, while he was working during vacation on the Merrill Daily Herald.

His "confession" is one of a series in which newspaper and magazine men have admitted mistakes, boners and blunders that they do not expect to repeat.

arm and go to the hotel. Borrowing a piece of paper and a pencil at the desk, I located my man and approached him. Not until then did I begin to realize the enormity of my offense.

"I've been waiting for you," was as much of a reproach as I got. From then on things went smoothly except that I was so interested by his engaging conversation and appalled by my own impudence, that it was difficult to catch everything.

**W**E were driven around the city by a driver he had hired at the station. Scraps from an exciting boyhood came out of the interview with some of the scenes which recalled them to memory. Like hundreds of other Americans of his generation, his was the story of success gained through ambition, opportunity and perhaps a little chance in his favor. That's what I could gather from a few voluntary fragments which he was willing to tell me about himself. The interview became a conversation as he asked me

about journalism, experience, life work, and school. I did not go back to the tennis court when a luncheon engagement called him back to the hotel. Dazed, and with the racket still under my arm, I found my way to a typewriter in the little newspaper office.

What guts, cheek and ingratitude, what imbecility, what sheer effrontery, I thought on my way home. A presuming young so-called reporter given one of the biggest assignments of the year because he happened to know of the story before the editor did. And then to set coolly about playing tennis for half an hour while having an appointment with a man who traveled about with a railroad car of his own.

I was a student in the school of journalism of the state university. I had been brought up with the goal of newspaper work as a vocation constantly before me. I had taken a course in reporting under a professor nationally known in educational circles. I had been drilled and repeatedly lectured to on ethics, reportorial conduct, methods of approach, and interviewing. My home and school environment always had been chock-full of shop talk on newspaperdom.

At the moment, I feel better for my confession, but I would be pleased to have some psychologist name the high-sounding ailment that affected me that morning. Whatever it may have been, this I know—that I was cured that morning—permanently.

DAVID LAWRENCE, editor of the *United States Daily* and widely known political writer, was the guest of honor recently at a round-table breakfast of active and alumni members of the University of Wisconsin chapter of Sigma Delta Chi, professional journalistic fraternity.

JOHN D. HOGUE, JR. (DePauw '21), editor and publisher for six years of the Vincennes (Ind.) *Sun*, who a year ago consolidated the *Sun* and *Commercial*, has resigned to become resident manager of the Orange (N. J.) *North Jersey Courier*.

# THE CAMPAIGN THAT WON ● THE ● PULITZER PRIZE

By DONALD D. HOOVER

Assistant City Editor, The Indianapolis News

**R**ECOGNITION of the importance of constructive news and newspaper service, as well as the national interest in economic subjects, is seen in the award of the Pulitzer prize to the Indianapolis *News* for the most disinterested and meritorious public service performed by any newspaper in the United States in 1931.

The award was based on the campaign of the *News* for reduction in taxes and costs of government. Immediate results of the campaign were a public awakening to the right of the individual to participate in tax determination and a saving of \$12,000,000 that extended into 86 of the 92 counties of the state.

In Indiana, as in other states, the taxpayer regarded taxes before the *News* campaign as a necessary evil to be borne apathetically. The attitude today is in marked contrast.

"Taxes and cost of government must be reduced," was the succinct order to *News* editorial executives from Warren C. Fairbanks, publisher of the *News*. "A firm grip on the public purse strings is one of the best means—perhaps the best—of improving the general quality of public service. Deprive greedy politicians of their ready access to loosely administered public funds and their chief incentive to control of public affairs is gone. The task before the *News* is one of education. Show the people how their taxes are determined, and create an informed public opinion that will demand lower costs of government and lower taxes."

With this order, the tireless campaign began.

**D**AILY conferences of the board of strategy were held. During the next few weeks, Ray D. Everson, the managing editor, conferred with key men on the paper, telling them of the fight that was to be made and passing on instructions to editorial writers and to the staff cartoonist. C. Walter McCarty, the city editor, hammered away at reporters to keep in mind that the slogan was "lower taxes, greater economy."

Mr. McCarty, realizing that a successful campaign with ramifications extending into every one of the 3,036 taxing units of the state necessarily must have a statistical service providing current and comparative data, enlisted the cooperation of the Indiana Taxpayers' Association, which for

nearly ten years had been collecting every budget and appropriation request in the state. The association had been recognized as the most scientifically operated private organization of its kind.

The next step was determination of the most effective manner in which to arouse public interest in taxes and to expose clearly abuses that were costing thousands of dollars every month. It was decided that the most elemental appeal involved was that to a man's pocketbook. The theory was recognized that news is that which affects people, and that the more people it affects, the better news it is. Therefore, despite the fact that the man in the street did not know at once that he was affected, the editors of the *News* dangled every major tax story before his very nose.

Page one—day after day, week after week—carried vital information, presented vividly and convincingly, pointing out to Mr. Average Citizen that he was being mulcted by high tax rates and by waste in public office. Through a series of daily front-page cartoons, the fallacy of waste was exposed to ridicule, and the importance of an alert watch over the public treasury was emphasized.

**T**HE first stories were written by reporters especially qualified for their task. One of them was the chief political writer who, as a part of the campaign for education in government, had written series on state county and township government that were used in the schools; another was the utilities and business expert; still another was a general assignment man of broad experience, and the fourth was a former member of the Washington staff of the Associated Press who had been assigned to the treasury department.

The groundwork of the campaign was:

a. Articles on the structure of government, which gave to readers a comprehension of the services they were paying for.

b. The statistical service of the Indiana Taxpayers' Association, which made immediately available the data of past performance necessary to present formation of opinion.

c. An existing governmental structure, insufficiently used, that included a state tax board with appellate jurisdiction.

d. The clearly defined but not understood right of the taxpayer to participate in budget making.

It was the purpose of the *News* to acquaint the public with its rights and to bestir it to exercise them.

As the drive got under way, the spirit of the fight permeated throughout the news room and reporters on every assignment—city hall, courthouse, statehouse—did their bit in obtaining information that would bolster the contentions of the *News* that "something must be done about it, and done right now."

**T**HE watchword of intelligent economy was held before budget-making bodies as they met to draft their budgets for 1931. In the few weeks before the sessions, the *News* began publication of another series of articles that had repercussions in all parts of Indiana. Comparative statistics were assembled by the corps of 300 correspondents in every city and hamlet of the state and by representatives of the Taxpayers' Association. Tables based on these figures were published with explanations that made them so simple that everyone knew just how his taxes were computed. The comparative tables showed, for instance, that in one county the cost of road maintenance was considerably less than in another, possibly an adjoining county with similar conditions prevailing.



Residents of the latter county immediately would investigate to find why they were paying more. If they could not bludgeon the county council or other tax-levying body to cut the rate, they appealed to the state tax board, which in Indiana has the power of approval or disapproval of all levies and bond issues. The *News* correspondents would cover the story in advance, agitating local interest if necessary, and would reveal discrepancies that should be adjusted.

The people were becoming tax-minded, now, to the extent that they were taking an interest in governmental problems instead of enduring what heretofore had been regarded as a necessary evil. They were becoming aware of their privilege, as individuals, to participate in tax determination.

Election time came. Editorially, through news stories, cartoons and otherwise, the *News* advocated election only of those pledged to economy in government. That was the yardstick by which it measured its support. The legislature met. It heeded the cry of the taxpayers back home. It passed a law denying to budget-making bodies the right to increase their budgets over the preceding years. This saving, not included in the \$12,000,000 estimated to have been saved by the campaign, will be felt in the budgets fixed next fall for 1933. For the first time, too, the usual increase in the appropriations for the state general fund were not made by the legislators.

**E**XPERT statisticians began to compute the results of the *News* campaign, which by now had enlisted widespread support from papers in other parts of the state. Cartoons, editorials and articles from the *News* were reprinted widely. The power of the state press was being turned against waste and high taxes. By means of publicity and mass meetings and protests against levies, \$6,000,000 had been whacked from the tax bill in the first few months of the campaign. And the fight really had just begun.

With these positive indications of results, members of the newspaper staff entered the next period of endeavor filled with an enthusiasm that spread to the taxpayers. The public now was in tune

with the demand for tax reduction on a scientific basis, eliminating frills without affecting efficiency.

If anyone wanted tax data, he turned to the *News* for it. Tax experts and business writers from other cities visited the files, studied the methods used by the *News* and the Taxpayers' Association, and went away to talk of the "Indiana plan," which by now was attracting attention at national tax conferences.

One of the outstanding features of the campaign was the intention of the *News*, expressed before the present nation-wide demand for retrenchment and a balanced budget, to create an economy sentiment that would not only obtain immediate results, but also would endure into the future.

As the campaign advanced, it became clear that township consolidation and, perhaps, combination of counties would save money to the taxpayers. Coordination of forces to handle poor relief, one of the few remaining duties of township trustees in Indiana, was urged as a means of eliminating duplication of work and waste. Unnecessary road building was halted and bond issues were opposed except in emergency cases. Although leading the fight for economy, the *News* made it clear that it did not favor crippling vital functions of government. It felt that sane economy would accomplish the desired results.

**T**HE immediate effect of the drive was felt in Indianapolis and Marion County on the 1931 budgets. More than half a million dollars was saved in the first few months. Attention was directed particularly toward three other counties, by means of comparative tables and special articles, and immediate savings were made of 12 per cent (\$104,963); eight per cent (\$123,000), and 2.64 per cent (\$25,000). In these counties the *News* had noted alarming increases were made each year heretofore.

The actual functioning of the edu-

cational campaign consisted of providing positive comparative data that either showed conscientious public officials the need for reduction or aroused public sentiment to the point of demanding reductions in government cost.

Comparative statements compiled by the Tax Association research department were published in full by the *News*, showing, for instance, the expenditures in Indianapolis by the civil city, school city and the county government over the period of 1925-30. Copies were sent to all taxing officials and to the state tax board for use in hearings on appeals fostered by the association. The result in Marion County (Indianapolis) already has been pointed out.

The importance of such comparative data, which brings home graphically the exact tax situation, cannot be overestimated, either as a technical service or an instrument that will arouse public sentiment. It was the supplementary service that provided ammunition once the fight was on. Through the *News*' columns, the idling machinery of Indiana's tax law was swung into motion by the aroused will of the public. The same service could be performed by other newspapers opposed to waste and in favor of tax reduction.

**B**Y comparing the federal census bureau figures of the nation with those for Indiana, it will be seen that the national average of annual increase in state and local taxes for the past few years has been between six and eight per cent, a condition prevented in Indiana largely through the *News* fight for economy. Students of taxation attribute increases in most states directly to the indifference of the taxpayers.

One advantage in the Indiana fight was that the state structure of government creates a tax board that is a check on public officials in their spending, and which effects state control of public expenditures. The tax

board, in ten years, has rejected proposed bond issues and ordered budget slashes totaling \$70,000,000, and has saved an additional amount through causing officials to watch their finances carefully for fear of appeal.

The *News* en-  
(Continued  
on page 15)

## Explaining How the Job Was Done

**E**VER since the Indianapolis *News* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for that newspaper's spirited and successful campaign to reduce taxes and the costs of government in Indiana, scores of inquiries have been received asking how the fight was conducted.

Donald D. Hoover, assistant city editor of The *News* and an associate editor of The *Quill*, details the methods followed in the accompanying article.



# THE QUILL

A Magazine for Writers, Editors and Publishers

THE QUILL is published monthly. It is devoted exclusively to the interests of journalists. Articles in the magazine may be reprinted provided credit is given to "The Quill of Sigma Delta Chi."

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JULY, 1932

## SERVICE OR SENSATION?

**S**ENSATIONALISM explains the circulation of many large newspapers, sensationalism of the type that brought to the press the derogatory term "yellow."

But it is service rather than sensation that has brought the press of the United States to its present position of influence and power—just as it is service rather than sensation that will enable the newspapers to keep that position.

Some publishers and editors have lost sight of the value and importance of service in trying under present adverse conditions to maintain advertising volume, circulation and some semblance of profits.

They have overlooked the truth that he who serves best, profits best.

For the most part, however, American editors and publishers have kept up editorial standards. They have continued giving their readers and their communities service not likely to be obtained from any other source.

No better examples of this fact could be cited than those contained in two articles in this issue of *THE QUILL*, one telling of the splendid service the *Indianapolis News* performed for the people of Indiana, a service that won for that newspaper the Pulitzer Prize, and the other, detailing the services of the *Fairbury (Neb.) News* which won for that paper the National Editorial Association's prize for greatest community service.

American journalism, for by far the greater part, is not a racket. It is not a sensational, mud-slinging, muck-raking, scandal-bearing pursuit for most of the men who follow it. It is not a calling of which to be ashamed, for which to apologize. It is a profession for most men, though they may call it a game or business, and they follow it because they know that they can and do perform worthwhile services of widespread benefit.

And by services, *THE QUILL* is not referring to many of the promotional stunts sponsored by the business and circulation offices and labeled "services," regardless of whatever merit those "services" may contain.

The services referred to here are those performed by intelligent, inquisitive and courageous newspaper men

who do not stop at the surface or the front office; who do not hesitate to tread in places where the light should be let in; who do not hesitate to attack conditions that should be attacked; who find the truth, print it and then interpret it.

## CLEANING UP THE CLASSIFIED SECTIONS

**T**HROUGH the columns of the classified advertising sections of the newspapers, various individuals, business houses, manufacturers and others have been following practices which amounted to preying upon the unfortunate and unemployed.

Misleading advertisements, appearing to offer opportunities of work, have caused heads of families to spend at least a portion of their limited means in responding to such advertisements. Others have induced unemployed men to put up portions of their scant savings in the form of "bonds," or "deposits" as a means of getting "jobs" that failed to produce much in the way of income.

The *Ohio Newspaper*, published by the School of Journalism at the Ohio State University, records how the classified advertising managers of Columbus, O., newspapers and the Columbus Better Business Bureau co-operated to combat the situation in the Ohio city. They agreed upon certain standards for classified advertising and the bureau agreed to check the columns of the newspapers and to make whatever investigation was found necessary.

The standards established were:

1. No advertisements shall be accepted for publication in "Help Wanted" columns which do not clearly offer bona fide employment.

2. All advertisements must convey a clear understanding of the kind of work for which the help is required.

3. No copy shall contain any phrase or clause which mentions the amount of money which may be earned when based on commission unless the terms of the commission are given.

4. If an investment is required, this shall be stated in the advertisement, and the advertisement classified under "Business Opportunities."

5. All advertisements for sales work, agents, sales managers, etc., shall be placed under the classification of "Agents and Salesmen."

Since the adoption of the standards, "help wanted" advertising has improved noticeably in the Columbus newspapers.

The plan should be followed more widely.

## BEHIND THE SIGNATURES

**W**HERE is this fashion of signed stories, other than those written by staff or press service members, going to end? It has reached a point now approaching the ridiculous.

Signed stories by 12-year-old boys who visit the President's office. Signed stories by aviators, prize fighters, principals in crimes or sensational trials. Stories signed by almost anyone other than the "ghosts" who wrote them.

The reader is supposed to believe that daily some so-called fighter sits down to a typewriter and prepares an article for the papers. He is expected to believe that the individual whose name is signed to the article wrote it.

The prestige of the press is not enhanced by fostering the impression that it takes no special training or ability to write for the papers—that any 12-year-old, any heavy-jowled fighter or any feather-brained individual involved in a crime can do the trick.

# Thumbs Down on the Ghosts!

By D. J. WELLENKAMP

**G**HOST-WRITING is as harmful and wrong in the field of journalism as the use of the fake testimonial is in the field of advertising. In fact, I will be dogmatic enough to assert that I believe this pernicious trick is downright unethical. It is a method of cheating the reader.

Perhaps I can illustrate by means of an analogy. The much discussed and often ill-treated Ultimate Consumer steps into a clothing store and tries on a suit. It pleases him in every respect, line, texture, and price. He asks the salesman if the suit is all wool. He receives an emphatic answer in the affirmative. He departs with his purchase, satisfied.

Let us now suppose that the salesman lied. As a matter of fact the suit was cotton-wool. Perhaps the customer will never learn that he has been cheated. But cheated he has been; that, I believe, none will deny. The merchandise was sold under false pretenses.

**N**OW let us look at the situation in our own backyard. The editor of a popular monthly magazine, let us say, recognizes the pulling power of a celebrity's name. An article signed by Hon. Whangdoodle Moneybags will boost his publication's sales by 50,000 copies. Therefore he must have an article from this great man.

No matter if Mr. Moneybags made his millions by a lucky market break and was transformed overnight from an uneducated nonentity to a public figure. No matter if Mr. Moneybags is absolutely incapable of preparing an article; it will merely be necessary to arrange for the use of his name and then assign a ghost to write the copy.

The readers who buy the issue containing Mr. Moneybags' masterpiece in order to enjoy its perusal are being cheated to the same degree that our friend the Ultimate Consumer was cheated when he bought the cotton-wool suit believing it to be an all-wool fabric.

If our editor is blessed with some

## OUTSPOKEN!

**T**HIS spirited attack on the practice of ghost-writing, made by D. J. Wellenkamp, director of public relations for the Illinois Life Insurance Company, probably expresses the views of many newspaper and magazine men on the subject.

Mr. Wellenkamp covered sports for the Passaic (N. Y.) Daily News, now the Herald-News, and the Clifton (N. Y.) Journal while in high school; then entered Northwestern University; sold insurance; served 14 months on the editorial staff of The Lion, publication of Lions International, Chicago, and then took up his present work. For the last five years he has been attending night classes at the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern.

semblance of a conscience he may publish the Moneybags feature giving Mr. Moneybags a by-line set in four-

teen-point boldface caps with the apologetic explanation "as told to ——" set in six-point italic beneath. Of course he hopes the readers will notice Mr. Moneybags' by-line and skip over the name of the actual writer. In either case, an unfair advantage has been taken of the reader.

The man or woman, editor, publisher, or writer who has anything to do with preparing the material which is to appear in the printed word for the public eye, be it through the medium of the newspaper, magazine, or book, has an unmistakable duty to those who read what he has caused to be set in type.

We must be honest in our dealings with our readers. And I am of the firm opinion that the offering of ghost-written articles to an unsuspecting reading public is absolute dishonesty. I admit that the person who reads such an article and believes in its authenticity has not been harmed physically or financially. Nevertheless he has bought misbranded goods.

Ghost-writing is, in my humble opinion, a cheap form of deception which should be frowned upon and outlawed by honest, square-shooting editors and publishers.



## \$5,000 Prize for Non-Fiction Book

The Atlantic Monthly Press and Little, Brown & Company, both of Boston, announce an "Atlantic Non-Fiction Prize of \$5,000" for the most interesting unpublished work of non-fiction submitted to the Atlantic Monthly Press before March 1, 1933.

The work may be biography or autobiography—the personal record of a life of interest and significance—the period past or present. It may be a study of modern science, discovery, or invention. It may be a history of a village or family or a chronicle of momentous import.

To the author of the winning manuscript, as determined by the judges, the Atlantic Monthly Press and Little, Brown & Company will pay, on the date of announcement,

the sum of \$5,000—\$3,000 as an outright prize, and \$2,000 as an advance on account of royalties. This sum will be paid for book rights alone.

The Atlantic Monthly Press and Little, Brown & Company have already conducted two highly successful contests in the field of non-fiction. In 1929 the Atlantic Biography Prize was awarded to the author of "Grandmother Brown's Hundred Years." Last year the Atlantic Prize for a work of non-fiction dealing with the American Scene was conferred on Professor Archer Butler Hulbert, author of "Forty-Niners."

Detailed information of this contest will be supplied by the Atlantic Monthly Press, 8 Arlington Street, Boston.



## THE BOOK BEAT

Conducted by MITCHELL V. CHARNLEY

### Light on Evolution

**KAMONGO**, by Homer W. Smith. The Viking Press, New York. 1932. \$2.00.

"Kamongo" is an important book. In it, Dr. Smith, using much of his own scientific career as a background for a semi-fictionized explanation of the "scientific attitude" toward the involved relation of religion and science, has done a fascinating job. Fascinating because it is so beautifully written—because the characters in it are so vital, the thread of story so engrossing, the telling of it so lucid and direct; because it deals with a current question on which so much has been said but so little as well said; and because it seems bound to leave its reader stimulated and curious, eager to go through it again and again and to think more deeply on its problem.

Dr. Smith's purpose is to show to his reader the manner of the scientist's thinking. The vehicle he has chosen is a dialogue between a wise, tolerant missionary to Africa and an equally wise and tolerant scientific explorer into the origins of life. The question, of course, is the unsolved one: Is there a universal plan, is there an all-powerful Spirit, or will the purely scientific explanation, unaided by faith, suffice? Dr. Smith does not seek to argue with the reader, it seems; he merely wishes to make his attitude clear.

He has written a book that will stand—and will get—many readings. He has treated his abstruse subject in a manner that the merest layman must enjoy. And he has contributed to the volumes of discussion on the question an exposition that stands alone by its beauty, its clarity, its understanding. It is a safe guess that "Kamongo" will set many tongues to wagging on the evolution problem; it is no guess at all, but a dead certainty, to say that it will give thousands a light on the subject that all the previous tomes have failed to reveal.—M. V. C.

### Below the Rio Grande

**MEXICO**, by Stuart Chase. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1931. \$3.00.

If you want to get an appreciation of the nation just below the Rio Grande, if you want to look at a pic-

ture which contrasts sharply with our own machine-dominated civilization, and if you don't mind an author who enthusiastically pursues his thesis, then you should thoroughly enjoy "Mexico," and you should learn something about Mexico.

Stuart Chase has been conspicuous because of his strongly publicized belief that the United States is being carried away by gadgets. In Mexico he found a country which has maintained a state of effective indifference towards Fords, radios and—not so comforting to Mr. Chase—modern plumbing.

It may be surprising to learn that a handicraft civilization can go so serenely on in spite of its exposure to chamber of commerce evangelism. Specifically, it may be almost startling to find a handicraft artist who charges increasingly more for duplicates than he does for originals. Certainly it is un-United States to have a community in which money is looked upon as a bothersome necessity, just as it is to learn that high wages merely satiate the desire for wealth, so that the Mexican factory worker finds he needs work fewer hours and fewer days to satisfy his low and apparently non-expandable maximum needs.

Mr. Chase hopes that the Mexicans can persist in their "damn wantlessness"; that they can resist the office efficiency experts and the automobile assembly line. He would, however, grant them bathtubs, electric lights and small household electric motors with which to facilitate their handicrafts.

"Mexico" is a good book to provoke or stimulate your thinking apparatus, and it does so with a touch both light enough to be appetizing and unusual enough to be interesting.—C. R. F. Smith.

### All About the Copy Desk

**EDITING THE DAY'S NEWS**, by George C. Bastian and Leland D. Case. The Macmillan Company, New York. 1932. \$2.50.

This volume is one of an increasing number which are reducing newspaper work to a science. Knowledge acquired through years of "trial and error" experience has been crammed into its two covers, and the student copy-reader can go through it in a few hours.

The book, a revision by Mr. Case of the work turned out by the late George C. Bastian of the Chicago Tribune copy desk in 1923, explains the complicated, somewhat mechanical process that improves the work of the reporter and rewrite man, prepares it for the composing room and displays it to advantage. It takes up in order the editing of news coming through a copy desk, covering all the processes necessary in handling and revising various types of copy—press association, cable and local.

Building headlines—perhaps the most difficult part of the copyreader's job—is well presented, and this section is augmented by chapters on "Making the Newspaper's Pages Attractive," "Makeup" and the selection and preparation of pictures. Another section describes the routines of

(Continued on page 17)

## RANDOM NOTES

UNDER the head "The Seven Year Wait" (which is a typographical error, I am convinced, for "The Seven Year Hitch"), The Viking Press announces its first and only detective novel. For seven long years, writes George Oppenheimer of Viking, the firm waited for the ideal detective story. This novel must have, he declared, no Malay krisses and Fu (if any) Manchus; no last-minute new characters dragged in to pin the crime on; no misleading clues to confuse the reader; and so on. The story came along, says Oppenheimer, in "The Tragedy of X," by Barnaby Ross, and if it's as good as its publishers believe, life is hardly worth while without a reading of it. . . . Gertrude Atherton's autobiography has been published by Liveright under the title "Adventures of a Novelist." . . . One of the newest books on the years ahead is "Recovery: the Second Effort" (Century) by Sir Arthur Salter. According to Charles Merz, Sir Arthur's description of the world's second attempt to get over the war is an extraordinarily "lucid analysis." . . . Dashiell Hammett, known chiefly for "The Glass Key" and such like thrillers, is to blossom forth soon with "Eminent Americans" (Putnam's)—non-fiction. . . . "The American Jitters" (Harpers) by Edmund Wilson, listed as "a description of significant events and tendencies in different quarters of present-day America," sounds interesting. The publishers do not announce Mr. Wilson's qualifications as an expert on jitters.—M. V. C.



## The Campaign That Won the Pulitzer Prize

(Continued from page 11)

couraged this right of appeal (which may be exercised by ten or more taxpayers), thus lessening political contract-letting, since the tax board has the set policy of approving only contracts awarded to the lowest qualified bidder. Taxpayers have no cost liability in making appeals and thus had at their disposal a powerful weapon if they would but use it. The *News* explained this to them, with the result that more than 100 appeals were filed in the first months of the campaign, resulting in savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

THESE appeals were the direct result of publication of the statistical tables that have been mentioned heretofore. The first of this series was published on page one under a two-column headline that pointed out that county budgets in the table reflected inequalities even though the counties were comparable in every way. The headlines asserted that the figures "may serve as basis for effective remonstrance" and said the "why" of the variation in levies was left to the scrutiny of the readers. To quote the beginning of the article:

"Why does the average farmer in Clinton County pay a per capita tax for himself, his wife and his infant child—of \$70.46 a year while his rural neighbor in Tipton County pays only \$51.64?"

"Why does the same farmer pay \$9.25 in taxes for the county general fund, while his Tipton neighbor pays \$4.85; his friend in Hamilton County pays \$5.13, and in Boone County, \$6.95?"

"How many farmers will attend the meetings of their county councils within the next two weeks to ascertain the cause of their high taxes, and how many will go to the county council meetings, Sept. 2 and 3, when the county rate is made, or attend other hearings at which state and township levies are fixed?"

The article then continued to show that obviously there was something wrong when there was such variance in counties selected for proximity and similarity of conditions. Similar articles, affecting other parts of the state, were printed, and aroused taxpayers attended hearings to demand a cut in the various levies.

THE article quoted, and others like it—all of them on page one—explained the table that appeared elsewhere in the paper, and directed attention to discrepancies.

Another case in point, where immediate results were obtained, was the following statement contained in a succeeding news story:

"Rush County farmers have burdened themselves with a per capita tax of \$7.81 for township road bonds, used to finance highways built under the three-mile road law, while their neighbors in Fayette County spend only 47 cents; in Henry County, 48 cents, and in Hancock County, \$4.84 for each man, woman and child in the rural communities for the same item."

In other words, the *News* provided specific information to the taxpayers instead of contenting itself with an

editorial plea for economy. It answered for every taxpayer the hypothetical question of "How does this affect me?" These articles were followed through until definite savings were obtained.

By making an educational campaign rather than a general shotgun crusade, and by pointing the way down the road to economy with mileposts of fact and suggested remedies, the *News* created a tax-mindedness on the part of officials and the public. Taxes, to the average citizen, now are more than a necessary evil to be borne sullenly. They are a business-like item in a huge family budget that must be balanced to conform with income, and in which every item must bear rigid scrutiny.

ECONOMY is regarded by tax experts as the best remedy for high taxes. Preferable to development of new sources of revenue, this old-fashioned retrenchment is the one way to cut down expenses.

The seeds sown by the *News* will bear results probably as long as this generation of taxpayers is living. The next generation will feel the beneficial results of the campaign also, since it successfully blocked numerous bond issues that would have amounted to a mortgage on the future.

The *News* now is directing its attention toward consolidation of townships, further elimination of frills in government, opposition to excessive public building projects and watchfulness over every penny of government expenditure.

## Thanks to the Depression—

(Continued from page 5)

who "straddled" at inopportune times. Last fall I had the chance to do an article on the subject for the *Jeffersonian*, a "slick" paper magazine which made its first appearance last July.

I always have wanted to write biographies and at last I have both the time and the financial inspiration to do them. At present I'm in the midst of a series called "First Ladies." The series consists only of sketches

of two or three thousand words but they are work in which I am interested. Four already have appeared in the *Jeffersonian* and another is in type.

THERE haven't been any letters or telephone calls from the editors of *Harper's*, *Vanity Fair*, the *Saturday Evening Post* or *Collier's*, demanding stories or articles, but I have sold a few other things and two or

three editors have shown interest in ideas that I have in mind.

The mail hasn't brought any checks which enabled me to tell my wife to "go out and buy yourself a couple of Russian sables," but we aren't starving. And 'though I haven't reached a point where people nudge each other and say, "There goes John De Vine, the author," I haven't written anything of which I'm ashamed.

## AFTER DEADLINE

By R. L. P.

**W**HAT can I do about a job? Many a journalism-school graduate is asking that question these days. And some graduates have written to the Editor, asking his advice on what to do and seeking his aid in assisting them to locate something. Meanwhile, similar pleas have come from experienced men whose jobs went out the window when lean days began following each other with regularity in newspaper counting rooms.

Would that I had a list of openings which I could send to them. Would that I could give advice that would produce jobs where there aren't any. Would that I knew of some positive way to land an editorial post. I haven't, I can't and I don't.

All I can suggest is that the job-seeker use every contact possible, follow up every lead given and keep his eyes and ears open for a story or stories that any city editor or feature editor would be glad to use. And, in the meantime, free-lance in fact and fiction to the best of his ability.

**T**WO articles in *THE QUILL*, one in this issue and one in the March number, suggest possible means of income to unemployed newspapermen and to those whose salaries have been trimmed.

In the March issue, Gurney Williams related in an article entitled "I'm Not Selling Apples!" how he began selling humor stuff while still a student at the University of Michigan.

He went on to tell how he looked in vain for a job following his graduation; how he finally betook himself and typewriter to New York and began turning out copy which he sent in a steady stream into the offices of various magazines. When he wrote the article he had been seven months in New York and had managed to support himself comfortably if not in penthouse style.

Now comes word from him which I am glad to pass on to his friends and others who read his article. Gurney Williams now may be addressed at the editorial offices of *Life*, where he has become associate editor.

**N**OT that I am advocating that every chap out of a job head for New York. Not at all! Marlen Pew, editor of *Editor & Publisher* and honorary president of Sigma Delta Chi, John Stempel, of the *New York Sun*, national secretary of Sigma

Delta Chi and associate editor of *THE QUILL*, and others have told of the many, many newspapermen, advertising men, publicity writers and others who are in New York without jobs.

Gurney Williams' experiences do suggest that a man may select a field of writing for himself, specialize in that field and gradually carve out a place for himself. And it wasn't in New York that he laid that foundation, but in Ann Arbor, Mich.

Then turn to John F. De Vine's article in this issue and read how the depression forced him to make his living by free-lancing although he had 12 years' experience in newspaper work of various types. His experiences may lend courage to others who are placed in his position.

**T**HERE'S another chap whom I have been trying to persuade to write an article for *THE QUILL*. This newspaperman found himself out of a job nearly a year ago. He has been free-lancing ever since, writing exclusively for newspapers. He has made a living for himself and wife, managed a trip to Alaska and at present is summering in northern Michigan turning out copy that is finding a welcome in various newspaper offices. He has written in any number of fields—out-of-doors, aviation, baseball, business, adventure, and others—and has become a good photographer as well, for he quickly learned the lesson that pictures go a long way in selling the story. Perhaps he will tell his story yet. I hope so, for it is packed with inspiration and good tips.

Next month, *THE QUILL* will contain an article concerning writing for both the "pulp" and "slick" magazines. It contains suggestions and advice. I believe that it will be read with advantage by many readers of the magazine.

**M**IGHT I add this thought. In the newspaper and magazine fields, no experience that befalls a writer is worthless. If the would-be or unemployed newspaper or magazine man finds that he must become a farmer, a clerk, a deck hand, factory hand or even a bum for the time being, his experience may be turned to cash now or later in copy of one form or another.

If the journalism graduate or unemployed newspaperman can live with his family for a while, or find

some other sort of work at present, and use his spare time to turn out all the good copy—fact or fiction—that he is able to produce, he will not be standing still and he may find that he is succeeding beyond even his fondest expectation. At least it should be worth trying when everything else has failed to produce a job.

There are four magazines which furnish manuscript market information.

They are: *Author & Journalist*, published in Denver, Colo.; *Writers' Digest*, published in Cincinnati, O., the *Writer*, published in Cambridge, Mass., and the *Writer's Monthly*, published in Springfield, Mass.

**S**PEAKING of magazines, reminds me that I have wanted to mention for some time an interesting new digest of magazine and newspaper articles. It is Joe Mitchell Chapple's *Reader's Rapid Review*. It is much on the order of *Readers' Digest* but seldom duplicates articles reprinted in that handy and informing digest. Those who read the two will find themselves well up on current topics and also get a good insight into the type of articles making the grade with editors these days. Incidentally, Editor Chapple has been finding many of *THE QUILL*'s articles of sufficient general interest to warrant him reprinting them in his review.

**M**AY I express briefly but sincerely my appreciation for the kind letters of congratulation on the arrival of young Philip Edward Peters and also to those who have written to compliment the editors on the contents and general appearance of the June issue.

### Bank Statements

(Continued from page 4)

have a broader value in reducing the severity of business depressions. Regardless of the theories of overproduction, purchasing power, and the like, which are prevalent among business men, economists are generally agreed that the cause of depression is the overexpansion of credit during the boom periods. If newspapers, even in a small degree, discouraged banks from loaning depositors' funds too freely, they would lessen to that extent the deflation of credit necessary during the depression period.



## The Book Beat

(Continued from page 14)

morning and afternoon papers. An appendix gives a glossary of newspaper terms, proofreading marks, headline forms and a journalistic bibliography.—William J. Kostka.

### The Dope on "E. W."

**LUSTY SCRIPPS**, by Gilson Gardner. The Vanguard Press. 1932. \$3.50.

Gardner, according to R. P. Scripps, has not written an "authorized" biography of E. W. Scripps, but he has done an excellent job of telling an intimate, personal story of a man whom Lincoln Steffens calls "one of the two or three great men of my day."

Scripps, starting in the traditional American manner, built a newspaper empire, unprecedented in scope and influence, and not likely to be duplicated—even by William Randolph Hearst. How he did it is an epic story of a few principles well applied and a continuous battle with politicians, capitalists, advertisers, subscribers, and his own family and friends.

"Lusty Scripps" deals with these as a natural part of the sequence. But the book is more a story of E. W. as the man of inordinate tastes and appetites; the circulation genius, the resourceful general in emergencies; the dreaming father; the restless mind which created Science Service, the United Press, and the Scripps Foundation for Population Research; the champion of the rights of the underdog; the millionaire with a pauper's point of view.

Gardner worked as secretary, adviser and confidant to Scripps for 20 years and because of that intimate contact was peculiarly fitted to write about him.—Steve McDonough.

### A Farewell to Frills

**WEEKLY NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING ECONOMIES IN 1931 AND 1932**, by Thomas F. Barnhart (Department of Journalism, University of Minnesota). Published by the Research Bureau, National Editorial Association, Northfield, Minn. 1932. .25.

Frills are expensive and furbelows are downright luxuries, in the opinion of small-town weekly publishers. Consequently they're being outlawed, and replacing them are local news and features, according to Professor Barnhart's survey. All of which, most newspaper men will agree, is to

the good. The elimination of too-extensive use of boiler plate and syndicated feature material in the weekly is at least one thing to thank the depression for.

The findings of this survey, based on an analysis of 171 papers in all parts of the country and published in a 32-page pamphlet, show you that there are an amazing lot of things the rural editor or business manager can do to hold his expenses in line with his income. The tendency to develop local material as a less costly substitute for purchased features is one of the most striking. But Professor Barnhart lists several hundred others and describes many of them briefly, under seven headings—editorial, business office, advertising, circulation, mechanical, job printing and stock room.

The survey is a complete and reliable one, and it should be in the hands of every newspaper publisher. Incidentally, Professor Barnhart and Dr. Casey's Minnesota Department of Journalism are to be applauded for the job. Departments of journalism are particularly well equipped to do things of this kind, and it can hardly be questioned that among their most valuable services in coming years will be similar investigations.

PHILIP D. STONG (Drake '18) is the author of "State Fair," issued by the Century Company (\$2.50) and picked by the Literary Guild as its selection for May. Called by the Literary Guild the "best farm novel in a decade," "State Fair" has received wide acclamation among book critics. It is Stong's first published novel, although he confesses to having written 13 others. Stong entered newspaper work through the editorial department of the Des Moines Register. Since then he has taught school in Minnesota and Kansas and worked in New York for the Associated Press, Editor & Publisher, Panorama, Liberty and North American Newspaper Alliance. He was on the Sunday staff of the New York World when it was merged with the New York Telegram. He is now with Young & Rubicam, New York advertising agency.

GARDINER C. MULVANEY (Columbia '31) is acting city editor on the day side for the Mount Vernon (N. Y.) Argus.

S. WAYNE GARD (Grinnell '27), editorial writer, Des Moines (Ia.) Register and Tribune, began on May 16 three months of temporary editorial work for Vanity Fair magazine.

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# WHO «» WHAT «» WHERE

ALMON W. McCALL (Northwestern '29) is editor of the Grand Haven (Mich.) *Daily Tribune*. He was the author of an article, "Michigan's Sand Dunes," which appeared in a recent issue of the *Michigan Education Journal*.

WILLIAM WINSTON COPELAND (Missouri '30), who has been with the United Press Bureau at Oklahoma City, has recently been made manager of the new U. P. Bureau in Fort Worth. His address is the Hickman Hotel.

JOHN THOMPSON (Iowa State Associate) is editor-in-chief of the *Wisconsin Agriculturist and Farmer*, published at Racine, Wis.

ELTON GARRETT (Washington '27) is having the unusual experience of seeing a new city in the making and also to participate in its growth. He has been named managing editor of the Boulder City (Nev.) *Journal*, the daily newspaper in the new city that Uncle Sam is building at the Boulder Dam project. Garrett went to his new post from the staff of the Las Vegas (Nev.) *Evening Review-Journal*, the owners of which obtained the permit for the establishing of a newspaper at Boulder City. Garrett had been with the *Review-Journal* for three years, having gone there from the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer*.

OLLIE M. JAMES (Kentucky '29), EDWARDS M. TEMPLIN (Kentucky '30) and VERNON ROOKS (Kentucky '32) are staff members of the Lexington (Ky.) *Herald*. Templin is state editor.

LEROY PLUMLEY (Kansas '29) is oil editor of the *Oklahoma News*, Oklahoma City.

JIMMY O'BRYON (Kansas '24) has been engaged in publicity-advertising work in New York City for the past two years.

JOHN G. GREEN (Ohio State '25), is editor of the Mansfield (O.) *News*.

CARROLL BARTLETT (Ohio State '24) is Willoughby representative for the Painesville (O.) *Telegraph*.

WILBUR E. SNYPP (Ohio State '25) is on the staff of the Lima (O.) *News*.

O. K. BARNES (Kentucky '29) has left the Lexington (Ky.) *Herald* to join the Associated Press staff at Louisville, Ky.

A. F. HENNING (Southern Methodist Associate), head of the Department of Journalism at Southern Methodist University, is the author of "Ethics and Practices of Journalism" published recently by Ray Long and Richard R. Smith, New York.

Six student and five faculty members of Delta Gamma Mu, local journalistic fraternity at Ohio University, Athens, O., were initiated into Sigma Delta Chi Sunday afternoon, May 22, in the editorial room of the *Athens Messenger*. Eight students from the Ohio State University chapter came from Columbus for the ceremonies, which were followed by a banquet at Hillcrest Inn.

The students initiated were: JOHN ALDEN, Athens; JOHN SCHNEIDER, Cleveland; WARD CONOWAY, Cardington; EDSON HOYT, Ebsenburg, Pa.; LARRY HAUCK, Erie, Pa.; and HARRY WADDELL, Clarksburg, W. Va.

Faculty members initiated were: GORDON K. BUSH, publisher of the *Athens Messenger*; CHARLES E. HARRIS, managing editor; WILLIAM F. SMILEY, city editor; PROF. GEORGE STARR LASHER, head of the Department of Journalism; and ROYAL H. RAY, instructor in the department.

Members of the installation team from Ohio State were: ROBERT HURLEY, president, CHARLES SCHMIDT, S. CECIL BARNES, BERNARD SCHWARTZ, MAX HETTINGER, ALFRED HEIZER, TED THRESS, and M. PHILLIP CHAPMAN.

VERNON MCKENZIE, dean of the School of Journalism at the University of Washington, has been awarded a travelling fellowship for study during the summer months in Germany and Central Europe. The award was made by the Oberlaender Trust, founded recently under the auspices of the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation. Gustav Oberlaender created a trust fund of \$1,000,000, the principal and interest of which must be spent within twenty-five years, to further a better understanding of German-American relationships. The award is made annually to a number of Americans who are "interested in international affairs and who are qualified to interpret their findings to the American people." Dean McKenzie will sail for Germany early in July. This was the first award made under the auspices of the Oberlaender Trust to a member of the faculty of any university on the Pacific Coast.

ARTHUR CAYLOR (Oregon Associate), feature writer for the San Francisco (Cal.) *News*, produced an exceptional human-interest story recently

when he tried out, as a regular assignment, the widely discussed "souseometer" devised by J. C. Geiger, health director of San Francisco, to establish the degree of intoxication of suspected alcoholics.

EDWARD ADOLPHE (Columbia '31) has left his post as city editor of the Mount Vernon (N. Y.) *Argus* and is on the city staff of the Providence (R. I.) *Journal*.

MALCOLM W. BINGAY (Michigan Associate), editorial director of the Detroit *Free Press*, recently was awarded an honorary degree, Doctor of Letters, by the College of the City of Detroit.

CARL C. MAGEE (Oklahoma Associate), editor, Oklahoma City (Okla.) *News*, is one of a committee of five appointed by Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray to designate the city blocks within Oklahoma City on which oil drilling will not be permitted.

JAMES A. STUART (Colorado Associate), managing editor of the Indianapolis (Ind.) *Star* and former national president of Sigma Delta Chi, professional journalistic fraternity, presided at Indiana University's third annual journalism short course at Bloomington May 5 to 7, inclusive. FRED FULLER SHEDD (National Honorary), editor of the Philadelphia (Pa.) *Evening Bulletin* and president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors, addressed the banquet given by the university in honor of the 105 newspapermen who attended.

WINSTON PHELPS (Columbia '31) and Mrs. Phelps have returned from Madrid where they spent the past year. Phelps won a Pulitzer scholarship last year and will be a member of the faculty at the Columbia University School of Journalism next year.

FRANKLIN C. BANNER (Pennsylvania State Associate), head of the department of journalism at Pennsylvania State College, recently sailed from New York for a summer tour of Russia. He will spend several weeks in England, where he was formerly engaged in newspaper work, before continuing to eastern Europe.

ROBERT L. HARBISON (Stanford '28) is a member of the Associated Press staff in San Francisco, Cal. He is the son of R. C. Harbison, editor of the San Bernardino (Cal.) *Daily Sun*, and was on the editorial staff of his father's newspaper for two years before joining the A. P.

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